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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2008

In Today's Papers

Turkey Watches the Deniz Feneri Court Case in Germany  
All media outlets continue reporting on the fraud case in a German court regarding the German-owned Deniz Feneri charity. Speaking to a court in Frankfurt on Monday, Chief Police Inspector Alexander Bohm, who is in charge of the investigation into irregularities in the charity, said the Turkish government did not exert pressure on German officials, but that they displayed close interest in the investigation. Bohm disclosed the minutes of meetings between PM Erdogan, Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin and German Ambassador to Ankara Eckart Kuntz. The minutes show that Erdogan and Sahin were following the developments in the Deniz Feneri charity investigation even when the German prosecutor had not finalized the indictment. In one meeting, Erdogan asked Kuntz whether there were any links between Deniz Feneri investigation and Kanal 7 Television. Erdogan also complained about the long detention of the suspects, according to the minutes. Inspector Bohm told the court there was no evidence showing that Deniz Feneri suspects delivered funds to Prime Minister Erdogan. He, however, added that Erdogan's name was written on an electronic receipt dated February 2, 2005, indicating that funds collected by the charity were to be delivered to the PM. There is no amount on the receipt, but the charity's accountant Firdevsi Ermis confessed the document was related to the transfer of 250,000 Euro from Mehmet Gurhan (Director of Kanal 7 TV Europe) to Zekeriya Karaman (Director of Kanal 7 TV Turkey) who, according to Ermis, gave the money to Erdogan. Bohm said the confessions of Ermis made the German inspectors conclude that initials in the receipts such as ZA and ZK referred to Zahid Akman (Turkish media watchdog RTUK's chair) and Zekeriya Karaman. Bohm also testified that Akman couriered the charity funds to Turkey.

Papers report the AKP leaders are expected to discuss the Deniz Feneri case at a party board meeting on Wednesday.

International Press Institute Responds PM Erdogan's Criticism  
Hurriyet and Radikal carry a statement from the International Press Institute Committee on Turkey in response to Prime Minister Erdogan's retort to IPI warning not to pressure the media. Yesterday, papers reported the PM replied to the IPI warning by

saying, "Who is IPI to give me an ultimatum?" The IPI Turkey Committee, in a written statement, criticized Prime Minister Erdogan for creating a pro-government media and called his treatment of stories critical of the government a "serious threat against press freedom." IPI pointed out that Prime Minister Erdogan has attended two different IPI meetings in Istanbul.

Cartoon in today's mainstream Hurriyet depicting a newsstand in the shape of PM Erdogan's head and implying the PM seeks to see the media as his mouthpiece. (Note: Hurriyet is the Dogan Media Group's flagship newspaper.)

#### Editorial Commentary on Deniz Feneri Case

Hasan Cemal in Milliyet comments on PM Erdogan's attitude regarding the Deniz Feneri case: "At the end of the day, Erdogan has now criticized and insulted even the International Press Institute (IPI). Of course, Erdogan is not the first PM to attack IPI since 1950s. But, there is one thing you should never forget - the Prime Ministers who have attacked press freedoms in Turkey and the IPI never win this kind of conflict."

Mustafa Mutlu wrote in mainstream Vatan: "While PM Erdogan threatens and blackmails the media in Turkey regarding the 'Deniz Feneri' case, German police Chief Alexander Bohme claimed at yesterday's court session that there was a connection between the

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government in Turkey and the courier of Deniz Feneri in Germany. Now, the Turkish media will write about this serious claim and the PM will get angry with Turkish columnists once again. Mr. Prime Minister, I would suggest that you continue to attack the journalists like me who do not keep quiet, but never ever dare to attack the German police chief verbally. Because, there is law, democracy and freedoms behind the German police chief and he will always be the winner."

#### CJCS Admiral Mullen Calms the Montreux Frenzy

All media outlets pay special attention to CJCS Admiral Mullen's press conference in Ankara yesterday. Mainstream Sabah reports Mullen emphasized, "The U.S. will continue to support Turkey as long as Turkey asks for U.S. support," regarding the war on terror. Leftist Taraf carries the headline, "The U.S. Military Chief Gives the Green Light for Cross Border Operations." Mainstream Hurriyet carries the front-page headline, "The U.S. will abide by the Montreux Agreement," and noted, "This is not the first time the U.S. has delivered aid via military ships to countries in trouble." Islamist-oriented Zaman writes, "The U.S. Has No Intention to Change the Montreux Agreement."

#### Editorial Commentary on Admiral Mullen Visit

Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Mike Mullen's visit indicates the good level of Turkish-American relations between the two militaries. Earlier, General General Basbug called the bilateral military-to-military relations "excellent," particularly in the fight against the PKK. However, there is a limit to the results achieved through military means, and Basbug is well aware of this. He knows that, regardless of the cooperation level with the American military against the PKK, this fight cannot be won via military methods only. Thus his meeting with the press today is very important. Basbug will likely mention the importance of implementing other measures to enhance internal peace while fighting against PKK at the highest level of international cooperation."

#### NATO Military Exercises Raise Eyebrows in the Black Sea

Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak carries the front-page headline, "Jackals in the Black Sea," and reports, "7 countries, including the U.S., are engaging in military exercises called 'Jackal Stone' in the Black Sea as a 'rehearsal for war.'" Mainstreams Milliyet and Sabah report a total of 1300 soldiers will be involved in the

exercises, according to a statement from a Romanian court, and the exercises will end on September 24th.

Yerevan Positive towards Ankara's History Commission Proposal  
Islamist-oriented Zaman reports that President Gul's visit to Yerevan began a new era in the Turkey-Armenia relationship. During the visit to Yerevan, Turkish officials observed that Armenia was more positive towards Turkey's proposal to set up a joint commission of historians to do a scientific research on 1915 incidents. Ankara is very pleased with this approach and interprets it as the "realizing the facts."

#### Global Economic Meltdown

All media outlets report anxiously on the effects of the continuing crises in global financial markets, particularly to the Bank of America buyout of Merrill Lynch and Lehman Brothers filing for bankruptcy protection. Mainstream Sabah carries the headline, "The Crisis of the Century," as "The entire world is feeling the effects of the mortgage crisis." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet carries the front-page banner headline, "Earthquake in the Markets." Mainstream Vatan notes, "The Global Crisis Brings Down a 158-Year-Old Giant," referring to Lehman Brothers, and calls there bankruptcy claim "The Biggest Bankruptcy in U.S. History." Mainstream Milliyet reports, "A Giant collapses, and the World is dumbfounded." Liberal Radikal calls yesterday "Black Monday," as, "The global financial crisis collapses two global financial giants." Islamist-oriented Zaman

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carries the headline, "The Masterminds of the Economy are ruined." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak leads with the headline, "The Brothers Collapse," as "Lehman Brothers collapses and the Bank of America buys out Merrill Lynch in order to prevent a global crisis." Conservative-nationalist Turkiye carries the headline, "Earthquake in the Economy - A Giant Bank Collapses and World Markets are Rocked." Economic daily Referans notes, "Markets Tumble as Wall Street's Giants Collapse."

#### Editorial Commentary on Global Economic Meltdown

Ibrahim Karagul wrote in Islamist leaning Yeni Safak: "The current events go beyond ordinary bankruptcy cases. This is clearly the demise of a global finance system led by the United States, a system that is a colossal failure. Those who were after a new world order will have to clean their own back yards because the system that they tried to design for the whole world has collapsed."

#### Editorial Commentary on DTP Closure Case, the Caucasus, Israel, German Marshall Fund Survey

Ergun Babahan wrote in mainstream Sabah: "Even if the DTP is closed, the Kurds' demands will not end, violence will not end, and the Kurdish issue will not be resolved. However, our fears should not create obstacles for democratization. Turkey's aim should be EU membership. A developing Turkey on the path to the EU will be a happy place for everyone regardless their ethnic origin."

Mustafa Balbay in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet: "We have no energy agreement with Iran despite the fact that Turkey has wanted this badly for years. Additionally, as seen in the arbitrary cuts of natural gas flow to Turkey, we have trouble keeping intact the few agreements we have with Tehran. Turkey has sunk into total impasse regarding the Balkans and the Caucasus. Together with the U.S., we were among the first countries to recognize Kosovo. Russia, inspired by the status of Kosovo, called on Turkey to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Turkey should be cursing itself instead of boasting."

Husnu Mahalli in mainstream Aksam: "Sooner or later, the truth will be disclosed and all will see it -- just like the Israeli PM Olmert who was forced to resign over corruption. Olmert says, 'The dream of a Great Israel has ended. Our people must see this fact and accept coexisting with the Palestinians and Syrians.'" We must congratulate Olmert for this speech. May Bush and his successors as well as our politicians and the lovers of the U.S. and Israel in Turkey see the same thing."

Ihsan Dagi in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "A recent poll conducted by the German Marshall Fund (GMF) shows Turks feel close to Palestinians by 40 percent. Europeans rank the second by 33 percent, Americans follow by 14 percent, and Russians 18 percent. Americans, toward whom Turks have chilly feelings, love the Turks by 47 percent - much more than we feel for them. The same rate for the Europeans regarding their warm feelings for Turks is 43 percent. No need to be offended, but as long as we continue viewing the world from a perspective of conflict and not cooperation, and thus continue seeing the outside as enemies instead of partners, we will continue swinging back and forth between democracy and militarism."

TV News:  
CNN Turk

#### Domestic News

- Pro-Kurdish DTP supporters protested the lawsuit for the closure of their party in front of the Constitutional Court.

- The ruling AKP's provincial board member, businessman Ali Askin,

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was abducted by the PKK in the eastern city of Tunceli.

- 40 suspects, including four doctors, were taken into custody in the southeastern city of Siirt over irregularities in health dealings.

#### International News

- Russian President Medvedev warned that any state which imposes sanctions on Russia over its military intervention in Georgia would suffer "symmetric losses."

- EU foreign ministers approved that on October 1, the 200 EU monitors will start their monitoring mission in Georgia and on the borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

- EU envoy in Afghanistan, Francesco Vendrell, says conditions there had become the worst since 2001.

WILSON